

Master of the House

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Clancy became a member of our family almost three years ago. Deceptively enough, he appeared to be a sedate little puppy at the age of six weeks, a round, pudgy, black and tan Doberman pinscher of impressive lineage, was presented to our daughter, Jody, as a Christmas gift. Her

first dog had died at the age of thirteen while Jody was still in college, and she wanted another to take his place. It was like replacing a tabby cat with a tiger! The entire household has had to become adjusted to living with Clancy. He has outwitted us at every turn and has succeeded in bending us to his will most adroitly.

Most small puppies are mischievous and active but usually tire after playing awhile and stop to nap occasionally. Clancy is tireless. So far as we have been able to determine, he has never closed an eye or stopped moving long enough to take a nap. At first he chewed something constantly. We tried to provide an object suitable for this activity, but nothing was so durable that he could not chew off bits and try to swallow them before we could stop him. This destructiveness tested our patience and ingenuity to the utmost as he went through a series of various dog toys.

Clancy has seemed to follow his own unalterable course in growing up. He never gave up one set of bad habits until he found a new and worse set. The book said that puppies should never be cowed or frightened by severe punishment. The book did not reckon with dogs like Clancy. There was no punishment which could be humanely administered that had any effect whatsoever on Clancy on his early life. When he was spanked with a rolled newspaper, he took it to be a new game thought up for his special entertainment. He enjoyed it and went merrily on as before. Scolding went completely unheeded. For example, every time he was allowed in the house, he would dash to the bathroom and seize the rubber door-stop to chew. Each time he was bad, I spanked him with a folded newspaper and scolded him. As soon as I released him, back he would go for the door-stop. He only left the door-stop when he discovered another forbidden object to chew. So long as he was in the house, he never stopped running, jumping, or chewing. We tried keeping him in for longer periods of time, thinking that he would eventually get tired and lie down for a nap. It always ended with the whole family being worn out and needing a rest after Clancy was returned to his pen.

When the cold weather gave way to spring, we moved Clancy from his basement pen to a new pen outdoors. By this time he was about five months old. He was very happy and content in the daytime, but at night he was disturbed by strange sounds. The rain dripping on the trees, leaves rustling, rabbits hopping past, airplanes roaring overhead, and

people passing by, all caused him to bark. Somehow he seemed more easily disturbed between the hours of one and four in the morning than at any other time. He finally became accustomed to the great outdoors in his own good time and in his own way. Nothing we could do made much difference.

We were all thankful for one matter. Clancy seemed to be as indestructible and as healthy as any dog could be. Daily he grew more sleek and beautiful. He took his shots and had his ears clipped with never a murmur or an upset. His appetite was prodigious. Therefore, when one day he could not eat, we all became thoroughly alarmed. In the six months we had owned him such a thing had never happened before. With his customary perversity he chose to become ill over the week-end when veterinarians were hard to reach. Finally we located a pet-doctor who came to the house Sunday morning to diagnose Clancy's ailment. Examination showed that the dog has swallowed an object which had lodged in the intestine and a major operation was required. The veterinarian set up his portable operating table over the laundry tubs and with my husband's assistance removed the object from Clancy's intestine. It proved to be a golf ball. In three days Clancy was full of life again and back to his usual pranks. We were greatly relieved but wondered what he would think of next.

The usual battle of wills took place when my husband decided to take Clancy to a training school. At the classes each master handles his own dog; the dogs are supposed to learn to "heel," "sit," "stand," and "stay" upon command. Clancy always became so excited by the other dogs that it took at least half of the allotted time to quiet him enough to work. Even the teacher, an experienced handler of dogs, acknowledged that Clancy had a mind of his own, one which was very hard to change. Clancy eventually won out, "flunked" the course, and has never gone back to school.

Clancy was dejected when we took our vacation trip last summer. Naturally ninety pounds of over-active Doberman could not accompany us on a long trip. The kennel, which unsuspectingly accepted him for two weeks, was the most ultra-modern we could find. With misgivings we left Clancy and went on our trip, determined not to let the dog spoil a nice vacation. However, we were uneasy all the time. Upon arriving home the first thing we did was to call for Clancy. As we suspected, it was a most forlorn, emaciated, and totally unrecognizable Clancy who greeted us. His barking, banging,

and restless behavior had had the whole staff at the kennel completely baffled. They had tried everything to please him—even to feeding him three pounds of hamburger and cottage cheese each day. He ate everything with gusto but continued to lose weight. He was glad to see us — pathetically so. Back in his accustomed self-regulated routine and his own family, he regained within a week's time almost all of his lost weight. Reluctantly we are now considering taking future vacations in relays, dividing up the family so that someone can stay home with Clancy.

Impish, mischievous, headstrong, perpetually active, Clancy has won our love completely. Of course he is fully aware of this fact. Clancy has chosen my husband to be his boon companion, one who shows great sympathy and a willingness to lend an ear to Clancy's desires of the moment. He regards Jody as a wonderful playmate, but since she is often busy in the evenings, she cannot be relied upon for all the play he wishes. For petting Clancy looks to my sister, Betty. She, weighing a scant ten pounds more than Clancy, confines her petting to times when another member of the family has him in hand and can assist in case discipline becomes necessary. As for me, Clancy has concluded that he cannot really influence me too much once I have determined what he shall do; but because I do have tempting morsels of food to hand out, I have earned some status in his affections. Pearlle, our factotum, serves him best as an audience for his antics. When Pearlle hangs out the washing, Clancy really enjoys himself. If his food pan is in the pen, he goes through acrobatics, tossing and rolling the pan as he doubles and twists and lunges. Yipping and barking as he bangs from one end of his pen to the other, he never subsides until he is sure that Pearlle has retired into the house.

These are the roles Clancy plays, and we have come to accept his dicta as natural. Descended from a long line of champions on both sides of his family, Klaus Assault von Hugel (Clancy) has emerged with a successful "rex" complex which we as mere human beings cannot combat effectively. I read an article recently, written by the president of the Hoosier Kennel Club, which asserted, "I like dogs because they live with you and for you." In our case Clancy certainly lives with us, but we definitely live for him.